



OPINION

Ebel: Tips on keeping your family safe during the holidays

Joe Ebel, Guest Columnist Published 11:05 a.m. ET Dec. 7, 2019

We all want our Christmas to be merry and bright. By following some simple safety tips we can avoid some all too common holiday mishaps.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reports that in 2018 there were an estimated 226,100 toy-related injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments and 17 deaths.

Holiday Toy Shopping Safety Tips from the CPSC and the Licking County Child Injury Prevention Program

- Follow age guidelines and other safety information on the toy packaging. Choose toys that match your child's interests and abilities.
- Get safety gear, especially helmets, for scooters, bikes, and riding toys. Helmets should fit properly and be worn at all times.
- Keep small balls and toys with small parts away from children younger than 3.
- Keep deflated balloons away from children younger than 8. Throw out broken or deflated balloons as fast as possible.

Holiday Cooking Safety Tips

- Cooking large family meals with extra people and little ones in the kitchen contribute to scald and burn injuries and fires. The number of home fires and burn injuries climb during the holidays. On average there are 1,800 cooking fires on Thanksgiving Day each year – that's 4x the average number on any other day of the year.
- Stand by your pan and have a fire extinguisher in your kitchen. Unattended cooking is the #1 cause of home fires.
- Keep kids out of the kitchen or away from the cooking area. Turn pan handles towards the back of the range and keep flammable items like potholders and paper or plastic bags away from the stove/oven.
- If a pan catches on fire, cover it with a lid to smother the flames or use a fire extinguisher. Never use flour or water to put out a pan fire. Call 911 if necessary.
- Make sure you have a smoke alarm on every level of your home, inside each bedroom, and outside sleeping areas.

Other Holiday Safety Tips

- Place lit candles where you can easily see them and away from flammable items like curtains. Blow candles out before leaving a room.
- Make sure your live Christmas tree stays well-watered throughout the holiday season. If you're buying an artificial tree, look for the "Fire Resistant" label.

For more Holiday Home Safety Tips visit www.cpsc.gov.

The Licking County Safe Communities Program reminds us to be safe as we travel to holiday events and on shopping trips. Always wear your seat belt, don't text or drive distracted, always drive sober, and obey the posted speed limits.

Winter weather can make driving hazardous, so remember to slow down. It's harder to control or stop your vehicle on a slick or snow-covered surface, and other drivers can be unpredictable.

Make sure car seats and booster seats are properly installed and that any children riding with you are in the right seat for their ages and sizes. Heavy coats and snow suits can interfere with the proper harness fit on your child in the car seat. Instead, choose thin, warm layers for your child and place

blankets or coats around them for added warmth after the harness is snug and secure. Children under age 13 should always ride properly buckled in the back seat. For more traffic safety info visit www.nhtsa.gov.

Taking a few extra steps to prevent injuries can help make your holidays happy, healthy, and safe.

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